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- 225 No one clamors for priority rights since, in view of the gigantic size of the animal, everyone can abundantly satisfy his wishes.
- [187] In general, the old, influential men reach an agreement with the one who first sighted or touched the whale as to which of them should undertake the dissection. Not everyone has the experience and skill to do this, but these are demanded in order that the distribution can proceed without a hitch and as little as possible of the meat and fat is lost. A so-called walaputés, a man who is practiced in cutting up a whale (348), chooses four or five helpers with
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348. BD:630 describes him as "clever, expert, careful in cutting up a whale" /cited in English/.

whom he attacks the giant animal.

They make a quick estimate to determine the number of people present. Then they immediately step up to the whale or on top of it, and with /577/ sharp mussel shells they cut off one piece of fat after another, the size of a small table-top. Each distributor begins at a certain spot on the carcass and first of all scrapes off the parasites from the surface, especially the common Balanus paitacus. Then he strips off the thin skin and makes incisions from above deep enough to strike the muscle tissues. Finally he separates the square flap of fat from below and lets it go to the first applicant. One small area close to another is taken off the whale carcass by the distributor. Before he gives away an individual piece, he makes a long incision in the middle of this large flap of fat, through which the recipient sticks his head. It hangs around his neck like a shoulder-cape and he goes off with it happily in the direction of his hut. It could not be as conveniently carried either on his back or in his arms; it cannot slide off and, besides, he has his hands free. Without discrimination, one after another of the persons assembled gets his piece and returns when he has consumed it.

Naturally, one or another of them can state his preferences to the distributor, for certain areas are tastier than others. Even on the trip to the spot where the whale is stranded people talk about the abundance that has now been offered them and express their preference for this or that morsel. One person, for instance,

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assured us: "Their common way of cooking is to put everything into the ashes until sufficiently done for their taste, or until their hunger could allow them to wait no longer" /cited in English/. All later observers, for example, Hyades (p):328, vouch for this general rule.

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Although the Fuegian literally lives from hand to mouth and sometimes finds himself in dire distress, he still shows an astonishing amount of self-control in eating, and this is sometimes forced on him by certain rules. We refer to his duty to cut up the booty he has brought home and let the neighbors share it (p. 314). Moreover, not every individual has free access to a stranded whale, but is content with the pieces that are given him by the chosen distributors (p. 309). Finally there are a few definite food taboos on certain occasions, which everyone observes.

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A law given by Yoflox says that berries -- actually, only those of Pernettya mucronata -- may not be gathered prematurely, and that they must be left on the bushes until old men declare that they are ripe. If some people should discover favorable spots where there are many berries, they warn their friends and neighbors: "There are many amfin there, but wait until they are ripe!" If, nevertheless, some women and children should look for that place and pick the berries, subsequent visitors will find the bushes empty and will say: "amfin agfin, the berries have gone away!" This means that the berries removed themselves in revenge and expiation for that forbidden act. Since the culprits are not known, but the bushes are actually stripped of fruit, the entire occurrence is given a superstitious interpretation. /589/ This is supposed to prevent the berries from being picked before they are ripe. At

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certain times determined by ancient custom, only a little food or only certain things are permitted, as, for instance, during the initiation, during the first menstrual period, after confinement, and so forth. In general everyone adheres to this conscientiously.

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Only occasionally is a person carried away to real immoderation in eating. Anyone who eats hastily and greedily is called Minja which is anything but respectable. Everyone is supposed to control himself sufficiently in eating so that others always

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1. Delight in the Child

842 We must say without qualification that the Yamana of all ages and of both sexes are extremely fond of children. The child is so necessarily a part of marriage that a newly wedded couple awaits the first fruit of their mutual love with longing. As long as a child has not been granted them, they feel as though they have nothing to do and do not know how to fill out the day properly. The young woman, far more than the man, feels an oppressive emptiness and a great gap which must be filled, the sooner the better. This mental state was described by Walter in the following brief words: /695/ "Soon after the wedding the couple become bored, for they lack children of their own to keep them busy. That is why the young woman, in order to ease her loneliness, visits her parents longer and oftener than her husband likes. He therefore waits patiently until the first child arrives. After that his wife stays with him in their own hut (107)!"

[591] 107. This is the chief reason why some young married couples after their wedding live with the parents of one of them before they establish their own household (p. 434).

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•877 Gertie, who had no offspring herself, confessed to me: "Until their first child appears, time is often unbearably long for the young couple. You can imagine what I suffer who have lost all hope for a child of my own!" In former times it was extremely rare that a marriage was barren. Such a married couple is very much pitied by the neighborhood. They try to cover their loss by temporarily taking into their hut and caring for a few children from among their relatives or acquaintances. Old people seem to be particularly dependent on the company of the little ones. Actually they are the most enjoyable entertainment and the jolliest diversion for all the adults. They tease each other and play freely and without restraint, as though the children were accommodating and ardently desired playthings. The natural open-heartedness with which old women tenderly fondled and affectionately carried any child, especially

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• 887 their own favorite, seemed to me much more direct and spontaneous among these Fuegians, and hence more impressive, than among mothers in Europe.

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152 As a result of their own love for the child, we can understand why our Indians quickly gain confidence in all Europeans who show themselves kindly disposed toward their children. How quickly Snow (a):I, 349 realized this and took advantage of it for the safety of his own person! He writes: "They were very fond of their children, and any notice we took of the little ones always gave them pleasure. This I observed on my first visit; and it was, in addition to firearms in my breast coat-pocket, one of the means I was prepared to use, had there been occasion when I went alone amongst them. A child in my arms was, I considered, a guard against any sudden attack upon me, if they loved their offspring as most savage tribes do" /cited in English/ (108). Anyone wishing to win

108. Phillips:58, on his very first encounter with these natives on October 22, 1855, on Lennox Island, made the same observation: "The women were greatly pleased with the notice I took of their children, and kept appealing for something for the 'piccanini'" /cited in English/.

the favor of the adults need only show himself tender and loving toward their children. How often have they themselves held up their youngest toward the white strangers to beg for presents. They valued whatever was done for the child more highly than if it had been done for themselves. Snow (a):I, 326 may again serve as a witness. In Banner Cove he saw /696/ the first natives coming toward him in a canoe. A younger woman was among them. "She had a baby at the breast; and frequently, with a winning smile and plaintive voice, asked, by the oft repeated words, Yamana Scoonal for something for the pauca ninne. Mrs. Snow gave her many little presents, for which she returned grateful smiles and Cuttacurra (apparently: many thanks) over and over again. Her attachment to the child was evident; and what was given to the child she showed she understood was for that purpose by putting it

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183 Thus, in everyday reality the sole guide, the established norm of life, consists of the prevailing customs, the tradition of the ancestors, the conduct of former generations. Old and young take this so much for granted that it seems to have become second nature to them. It is neither criticized nor resented, never attacked nor altered. Everything characterized as ancient custom is regarded as legal and therefore binding; whatever is contrary to it is universally condemned as unjust or improper.

Everyone pays great respect to traditional custom for its own sake and as a compulsory expression of the will of Wataunéiwa. Certain institutions, such as the ciéxau, kina, and lōima, are cherished with exceptional care; other customs, such as the instructions for girls at the menarche (p. 571) and sharing of spoils brought home from hunting (p. 314), are cultivated with great conscientiousness. Everyone accepts his individual obligation as fact and yields without contradiction; it suffices for him to know that this or that has always been accepted among the Yamana, which is enough to make it binding for him, too, under like circumstances. It is the oldest persons of any group who, of their own accord, feel the greatest urge to follow exactly along the lines of ancient custom in their personal conduct. They are clearly aware of their duty to set a good example for the younger age levels, since this is more impressive than words. As often as there is an opportunity on public occasions and in private exchanges, they demand strict observance of the traditional order and good ancient custom. They also admonish anyone who in any particular point becomes negligent toward universal custom. Several men will even confer among themselves to see how they can stem the increasing offenses of a younger member of the tribe, with severity, if need be. Everything that was handed down by their forefathers is much too sacred to them to have it destroyed, even in small part, by thoughtless young people.

183 In this attitude their sound judgment concerning the value of the good things of old is a contributory factor. The group of young people cannot yet appreciate this value, but the old people are absolutely convinced of it and therefore base upon it alone the firm continuance of their society and the contented existence of the individual. Many an old Fuegian emphatically told me, "If our forefathers found all our institutions good, why should they not be just as advantageous for us!" Their rigid adherence to traditional

x-756 /1364 cont./

uncertainty that everyone has in dealing with the yékamuš and the individual's fear which is sometimes extreme. The yékamuš are also said to be wholly different physically from the other members of the tribe, and this belief widens the gulf between them. In daily association the restraint of the people, inspired by their fear of the yékamuš, is almost never clearly recognizable, and the latter's activity is usually quite inconspicuous. Nevertheless, no one forgets that the medicine man, as a creature of a strange species, is to be carefully treated and most wisely avoided, because he has forces at his disposal and is equipped with capabilities which are denied the majority of Yamana and against which they are defenseless.

1. His Relation to the People

If one were to count all the natives of both sexes in the Cap. Horn Archipelago who work in one way or another as yékamuš, either with their whole personality or /1385/ with less ability, even down to the ones who make bungling attempts, he would arrive at a considerable figure. A closer look reveals that many an aged man more or less confidently regards himself as a medicine man (317), but this does not mean that each of

• [1387] 317. Bridges observed that "most of the older men are doctors, but very seldom a young man, unless he is particularly cunning and clever" /cited in English/ (VSA:XI, 258;1864). Later he (h):209 and (i):18 asserts more definitely: "Men over thirty or forty years of age usually entered the ranks of doctors or exorcists" /translated from Spanish/. Even a third time he (e):332 says briefly: "Almost every older man was a sorcerer." Cf. Hyades (q):256.

then is fully accepted as such by the public and by his neighbors. The call to this office in younger years is an unavoidable condition. In BD:73 one finds the term ūaana, "a man who is not a

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156 coals witnessed by Rev. Thomas Bridges (1893, p. 238) may have
887 been part of this training.

156 Graduation from the shaman school did not insure a successful
887 professional career, for only by repeated proofs of power could the
individual's reputation be established. It

● seems that there was much competition among the medicine-men, and several early observers note a tendency of almost all the older people to work cures, to prophesy, etc.

156 In fig. 94 is
415 illustrated the
guanaco-hide bag in which the shaman carried his impedimenta. The contents were dia-



FIG. 94.—Yahgan shaman's bag. Diameter, 11 in. (14/2337)

demids of heron-plumes and of kelp-goose down, and white paint. To these doubtless should be added a number of small hard objects to be shown to the sick as the cause of their pain.

DEATH

764 When death took place the corpse was wrapped in old seal-skins and buried outside of the house within twenty-four hours. If the ground were frozen, the corpse might be covered with stones and shrubs to keep off dogs and foxes, or it might be buried in a cave or on a small island. Hyades (1891, p. 379) says that when death occurred far from home the body was carried into the woods and cremated. This was done that the bones might not fall into the hands of enemies and be made into harpoon-points.

765 For mourning the family of the defunct covered themselves with